

Working Notes

**TOWN OF ROCKY HILL
PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE
MEETING OF MARCH 17, 2014**

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chairwoman Nadine Bell called the March 17, 2014 Public Safety Committee meeting to order at 6:04 p.m. in the Council Chambers of Rocky Hill Town Hall, 761 Old Main Street, Rocky Hill, CT.

Those in attendance: Councilor Guy Drapeau and Councilor Bill MacDonald. Also present: Barbara Gilbert (Director of Public Safety/Town Manager), Chief Mike Custer (RHPD), Deputy Chief Bill Keehner (RHPD), Chief Mike Garrahy (RHFD), Fire Marshal Rich Renstrom, Assistant Chief Dave Kromas (RHFD), Deputy Chief Mark Gentile (RHFD), Lieutenant Brian Klett (RHPD), Sergeant Joe Phelps (RHPD), Mayor Henry Vassel (Entered at 6:20 p.m.), Jessica Dumas (Executive Assistant to Town Manager), Councilor Meg Casasanta (Entered at 6:05 p.m.), Councilor Joe Kochanek (Entered at 6:05 p.m.) and Councilor Frank Szeps (Entered at 6:05 p.m.).

Those absent: Chief Joe Grayeb (RHVAA).

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES & WORKING NOTES

Councilor Guy Drapeau made a motion to approve the Minutes and Working Notes of the January 27, 2014 meeting of the Public Safety Committee. The motion was seconded by Councilor Bill MacDonald and adopted unanimously.

III. MEETING OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

Chairwoman Nadine Bell asked if there was anyone from the public who wished to speak at this time. There was no one from the public who wished to speak.

IV. NEW BUSINESS

A. Update – 60 West Street

Chief Mike Custer said there were no calls for service at 60 West Street in February 2014. There are currently twelve residents there who are under the control of the Parole Department. There are another thirty-two residents who are under the control of the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services. The total population there is approximately forty-four residents. He said this was all the information that he had. Chairwoman Nadine Bell thanked Chief Mike Custer.

Town Manager Barbara Gilbert asked Chairwoman Nadine Bell if she could add something and she said absolutely. Town Manager Barbara Gilbert said the Town had originally started going to the Appellate Court with regards to this and this has been “bounced up” to the State Supreme Court now. They are hoping to be on their docket for April 2014 or May 2014. From what she has seen, she said this looks like it will happen. She mentioned that she also had received an interesting phone call on Friday morning from Secretary Ben Barnes of OPM (Office of Policy and Management). Town Manager Barbara Gilbert said Secretary Ben Barnes had made a proposal to her and she referred him to the Town Attorney. Chairwoman Nadine Bell said she guesses that they will stay tuned for that.

B. Discussion and Action – Microwave Radio Project – Police Department

Chairwoman Nadine Bell asked who would like to talk about this. Chief Mike Custer said the Town Council had awarded them money last year to go out and improve their connectivity issues with the public safety radio system that there is for the Town. Two companies submitted RFPs (Request for Proposal). He said a Committee was formed and they sat down to listen to the presentations of both of these companies. The Committee was pretty much unanimous in going with Northeastern Communications after they had thoroughly examined their proposals. He told everyone that they presently had before them a proposal for \$370,000 for them to convert their telephone lines into a microwave link to link, point to point system. They will need approval from this Committee tonight, as well as from the Town Council tonight at its meeting, so that they can move forward with this.

Chairwoman Nadine Bell asked if there were any questions. Councilor Guy Drapeau told Chief Mike Custer that he had a couple of small ones if that was okay. Chief Mike Custer said sure. Councilor Guy Drapeau referred to Motorola and he said there was a star next to “prices shown...”. He asked if they got any quotes from Motorola directly. Chief Mike Custer said yes. Councilor Guy Drapeau asked if that is at the same number too and Chief Mike Custer said yes. Councilor Guy Drapeau said the company that is quoting this is waiving their rights on the pricing on this so he told Chief Mike Custer that he was just getting clarification that this is accurate. Chief Mike Custer said it is. He had just gotten a quote from Sergeant Joe Phelps that they are within the allotted money that has been budgeted for this. They will be getting the latest components that are available from Motorola. Chief Mike Custer said there was the older version when the bid had come in and they will be getting the newer version for the same price.

Town Manager Barbara Gilbert told everyone to keep in mind that as this system is installed and as the years go by, they are going to exponentially see a cost savings as the telephone lines are taken out of service. They won’t need the phone lines at all eventually.

Chairwoman Nadine Bell said thank you. Councilor Guy Drapeau said he had no further questions and he said thank you.

Chairwoman Nadine Bell asked if anyone in the audience had any questions. No one in the audience did.

Chairwoman Nadine Bell asked for a motion to have this moved to the Town Council.

Councilor Guy Drapeau made a motion to approve the Resolution – Award of Bid – Microwave Transmitter Point to Point System – Police Department and forward this to the Town Council. The motion was seconded by Councilor Bill MacDonald and adopted unanimously.

BE IT RESOLVED that the Rocky Hill Town Council award the bid to supply and install a Microwave Transmitter Point to Point System to be used by the Police and other Town of Rocky Hill departments to Northeastern Communications, Inc., 7 Great Hill Road, Naugatuck, CT at a price not to exceed \$370,000. This Microwave Transmitter project will be charged to the Capital Improvement Budget – Microwave Radio Transmitter – budget line 01-950-000-5791.

Report and Recommendation:

The Town advertised for companies that could supply and install a microwave transmitter point to point system on November 7, 2013. A mandatory pre-bid meeting was held on November 20, 2013 with two vendors in attendance. Those two firms did submit proposals on December 20, 2013 and each one came in on January 8, 2014 to give a brief presentation on its proposal. After reviewing the proposals and the attending the presentations, the Police Department recommends awarding the Microwave Transmitter project to Northeastern Communications.

Other Bidder:

Utility Communications, Inc., Hamden, CT

C. Discussion – Scott Air Packs

Chairwoman Nadine Bell turned to Chief Mike Garrahy. Chief Mike Garrahy said he thought that their timing might have been a little bit off the last time they had discussed this. He said that he had a synopsis. He told Town Manager Barbara Gilbert that this had been sent to her on Thursday or Friday of last week and he asked if the Councilors had gotten this in their packets. Town Manager Barbara Gilbert asked how this had been sent to her and Chief Mike Garrahy said this had been sent to her via Jessica Dumas. Jessica Dumas agreed. Councilor Guy Drapeau asked if this was with regards to critical changes. Chief Mike Garrahy said this was for the critical changes of the air packs. There are a lot of big changes and some of these are with regards to the way the low air alarms are coming in. The firefighters will be given more time to escape. Another change will be for the heads-up display. This is required right now to read at the 50% mark. It will be reading at 100%, 75%, 50% and 25% so that they will get a better idea of what is going on. He also said that the Committee has gone to NIOSH and this will also be part of the Federal Code of Regulations. He mentioned that there is a date of August 24, 2014. He told this Committee that he wasn't sure what other information they were looking for on this after they had talked the other night so he said that he would be happy to open this up for questions.

Town Manager Barbara Gilbert said she was the one who had asked for the backup data on this so that this Committee could be given whatever there is so that they will know about this. She

said this is what this information is. She knows that the new NFPA Standard isn't coming out until June 2014 but she said that this Committee needed to see something in order to have an open discussion. She said this is for whatever standards there are that could be come up with. She explained that this wasn't a request by this Committee but this was something that she had asked for to be put in the packets for them. Chief Mike Garrahy said he understood better now.

Chairwoman Nadine Bell asked the Councilors if they had any questions. Councilor Guy Drapeau told Chief Mike Garrahy that he had the pleasure of meeting with him the other day and it had been a very insightful meeting. Councilor Guy Drapeau told Chief Mike Garrahy that it was good to get to know him for the hour and a half that they were together. Chief Mike Garrahy thanked Councilor Guy Drapeau. Councilor Guy Drapeau told Chief Mike Garrahy that he thought he knew a couple of the questions that he was going to ask because he had asked them in confidence. Councilor Guy Drapeau referred to the Federal Code of Regulations and he said that sounds like a law but he asked if this is a law or just a recommended update. Chief Mike Garrahy said the Federal Code of Regulations is what OSHA pulls its regulations from. These are the public regulations that the Occupational Safety and Health Administration works off of. He said that once this gets adopted in June 2014 then this will part of OSHA. He believes that it was the first week of February 2014 that they were caught off guard with this. There is really going to have to be some phasing of this. Councilor Guy Drapeau said this was going to be his next question. He told Chief Mike Garrahy that they both understand that they want the firefighters to have the best and newest equipment available and they also agree that sometimes the economics don't allow for them to have the "Ferrari" of everything. Councilor Guy Drapeau told Chief Mike Garrahy that one of the things they had talked about the other day was if the RHFD has some air packs of a legacy style that are in really good condition and he told him that he thought he had indicated that some of them were. Chief Mike Garrahy said yes. Councilor Guy Drapeau told Chief Mike Garrahy that they had also talked about how he wants to stay on the same platform at every fire. Chief Mike Garrahy said this is exactly it. He said the RHFD had received some conflicting information towards the end of last week.

Chief Mike Garrahy said he would ask Fire Marshal Rich Renstrom to help him out here as to whether some of the air packs can be retrofitted. Chief Mike Garrahy said he wouldn't be doing his job right if he wasn't pushing for the best equipment for the firefighters. Councilor Guy Drapeau said he understood completely. Chief Mike Garrahy said he also needs to have this done in the most economical way. A lot of the air packs are old. Existing air packs were used when they put the last fire trucks online and they didn't buy new ones. Chief Mike Garrahy asked Fire Marshal Rich Renstrom if the RHFD has air packs that can be retrofitted. Fire Marshal Rich Renstrom said they have two air packs that can be retrofitted to meet this standard. He explained that this has "come out of left field" because when they had changed the technology of the mask four years ago, the fire departments were being pushed to purchase new masks. The RHFD went to Scott to ask what they could do to retrofit their current masks so that they wouldn't be asking for hundreds of thousands of dollars. They went through the NIOSH Standards to come up with a plan and all of the current masks were retrofitted to meet the current NIOSH Standards. Councilor Guy Drapeau said good. Fire Marshal Rich Renstrom said they are being told now that those are no good. He said the air packs have been upgraded with regards to the bottles and the masks but they haven't changed the frames per se. This standard will require them to replace the frames and the facepieces because there are fire retardant

qualities of the new masks, as well as chemical, biological, nuclear and radiological components that are not under the legacy. They want all of this upgraded. He said to answer the question of the 29 CFR, which is the Code of Federal Registry, this NFPA Standard will be put into the OSHA 1910 CFR Standard so that this becomes an OSHA Regulation down the road.

Councilor Guy Drapeau said what he was going to say is purely from an economic perspective and he said that he had asked this to Chief Mike Garrahy the other day. Councilor Guy Drapeau said the price tag is relatively high. He asked if the firefighters are safe and if they are able to get the job done with the current air packs. He told Chief Mike Garrahy that he thought his answer to this had been yes. Chief Mike Garrahy said yes. Councilor Guy Drapeau then asked if it would be possible to rearrange firefighting protocols for the next two years in order to allow for two different platforms so that a phasing in can be done over the next two to three years which will be a little bit of a relief on the budgeting obviously. He said this would particularly be for this year because it is such a tough one. Chief Mike Garrahy told Councilor Guy Drapeau that he had said no to that but he actually did go back and he really “hit the books” after he had talked with him for a couple of hours. Chief Mike Garrahy told Councilor Guy Drapeau that he wanted to change his answer to him and he told him that he would tell him why. Chief Mike Garrahy said if they could get the air packs then the RHFD would store them because he doesn’t want to phase them in. He wants everyone to work off of the same platform. He explained about them storing these so that they can bring the inventory out all at once. He said if this takes a couple of budget cycles then they will have solved the problem. Councilor Guy Drapeau said these could be the backups in case something goes down. Chief Mike Garrahy said they keep maintaining the ones they have and he doesn’t want to lose track of one air pack out there within the department. He explained that they would store these until they could get them all together to do a transition. The training on these could be done all at once and the firefighters could be recertified on these all at once. This will probably take more than a month to turn these over but he thinks this would be helpful to everybody. Fire Marshal Rich Renstrom said they probably won’t even be able to buy these for another six months because there are none in production.

Councilor Guy Drapeau said he thinks they would appreciate it if they could push it over more than one budget cycle but his concern is if this will hinder the firefighters’ ability to do their job appropriately and safely. He said if the answer is no then he thinks they should try to achieve this if it is possible. Chief Mike Garrahy told Councilor Guy Drapeau that their meeting was great last week and it really helped him to get back into the books on this. Chief Mike Garrahy thinks the best way to do this is to spread these out as long as they can have these put on the line all at once. If they can fund these over two years then they will do it. Councilor Guy Drapeau said great.

Councilor Bill MacDonald said thank you very much for helping them to understand this. The safety of the firefighters is first even though economics is always important. He said if this means that other things out of the budget have to be prioritized in order to pay for these then they will do that or he thinks there will be some discussion on this at least. He said at the end of the day though that this is really a technical issue and he told the RHFD that they are looking to them to tell them if they should have these in their budget or not. He told them if they feel that this is a matter of insuring that the firefighters will be safer then he told them to have this put in their budget and he will push to try to get it. He told them if they are telling them that they can

wait a couple of years to do this then this is what they will do. He compared this to putting the lines on a football field because he said they have to do that and when there are safety issues, there is a zero priority so that means it has to be done. He mentioned that firefighters should get the best equipment. He told the RHFD if more information comes in about this between now and the budget session for them to let them know where they think this fits in with everything else. Chief Mike Garrahy said absolutely and he told them that they will be bringing the information to them as they get it. There won't be any time delay with this. He told them if they have questions on this for them to feel free to ask and they will do their best to answer them.

Chairwoman Nadine Bell said she had one follow-up question on OSHA. She is assuming that this doesn't become an official standard until OSHA approves it and comes forward with a new standard. Chief Mike Garrahy said if he remembered the relationship correctly that NFPA will approve this at their World Safety Conference, which is in the first week in June. OSHA will take the NFPA publications and they will adopt those without going in and altering them. Chairwoman Nadine Bell said this was her question. Chief Mike Garrahy said they take NFPA's word for it and they will use a safety standard when NFPA puts one out. Chairwoman Nadine Bell said that she works with OSHA in her job and she knows that something they all hear about that is going to become an OSHA standard ends up being changed often. She said that she guesses this is where she was coming from when she asked this question. She asked if NFPA approves this if it is an automatic that OSHA will adopt it. Chief Mike Garrahy said that he knows that OSHA and NFPA partnered up a couple of years ago on this and he said this is his understanding of the process.

Town Manager Barbara Gilbert asked if OSHA gives effective dates when they adopt certain regulations. She explained some more. She then said that OSHA gives them time to comply. Chief Mike Garrahy said they are going to have to give them time to comply because there are procurement issues and training issues. He has never seen anything this large from OSHA before. The Confined Space Standard was the last one that he was involved with. OSHA had given them time to comply to this, as well as to train, to equip and to outfit. Town Manager Barbara Gilbert said if not then every Town in the Country will be non-compliant other than for those few who have bought the equipment already. She explained some more.

Chairwoman Nadine Bell asked if there was anyone in the audience who had questions. Councilor Joe Kochanek said that basically the conversation that had just transpired is typical. NFPA will come up with a new standard for one reason or another and he said this isn't to mention the fact that sometimes there is a commercial part of this. When NFPA comes up with a standard, it does become part of an OSHA agreement. He said there is no way that they can make everyone change these things over within the next two years because he said they can't make these. Every Town that doesn't have the funding to do this would be noncompliant theoretically. He said the equipment that everyone is using today is the top of the line for what it was and he said that it still is. He explained that this doesn't mean that it is any better than it was the day before just because a piece of paper comes across the desk. He believes that Chief Mike Garrahy is being very reasonable with regards to phasing the air packs in. Councilor Joe Kochanek said he would be doing the same thing if he was sitting in Chief Mike Garrahy's position. Councilor Joe Kochanek said he would be asking for a piece of this today, a piece of this tomorrow and a piece of this down the road. This makes more sense to him instead of them

trying to get all of these because money will be allocated that they can't spend. There aren't enough of these air packs around and they aren't even making them yet. He said this is the right way to do this. He told them that they can't start "running around in circles" because OSHA is saying that this is the law. The right thing to do would be to take the new technology and phase it in within a reasonable amount of time. They can then say that they have the greatest and the latest. He said what they have right now works just fine otherwise they wouldn't have it out there.

Chairwoman Nadine Bell and Chief Mike Garrahy thanked Councilor Joe Kochanek for his comments. Chairwoman Nadine Bell asked if there was anything else on this topic. There was nothing else.

V. DEPARTMENTAL UPDATES

A. Fire

Chairwoman Nadine Bell thanked Chief Mike Garrahy and his Staff for the time they spent with her and Councilor Bill MacDonald last Tuesday evening, as well as the time they had spent with Councilor Guy Drapeau. Chairwoman Nadine Bell said this had been very informational and she said from their perspective that this was time that was well spent. She had particularly enjoyed seeing the ice rescue drill. Chief Mike Garrahy said the RHFD appreciated them coming to visit. He mentioned how he had told Chairwoman Nadine Bell, Councilor Guy Drapeau and Councilor Bill MacDonald that the RHFD probably doesn't promote itself as well as it should. Chief Mike Garrahy said seeing is believing and he told them that he really appreciated them doing that.

Chief Mike Garrahy referred to the RHFD's Monthly Report for February 2014. The year-to-date is one hundred and three for the incidents they had responded to. There were three hundred and sixty-six training hours that were recorded for a year-to-date total of six hundred and seventy. There were one hundred and nine administrative hours for a year-to-date total of one hundred and seventy-two. The Fire Marshal performed seventy-two inspections for a year-to-date total of one hundred and thirty-seven. There were two fire investigations for a year-to-date total of five. Their Staff is pretty much the same. Station One has twenty-four members, Station Two has thirteen members, Station Three has seventeen members, the Fire Police has eight members and the Staff also has eight members. Five of their members are on a leave of absence. There was one resignation. There has been one new firefighter so far this year. He said hopefully there will be three new firefighters and two new cadets for the year-to-date total for his next Monthly Report because he said this is what they have "in the pipeline" right now.

Councilor Guy Drapeau told Chief Mike Garrahy that this was a great report and he asked if he could get this in a grid format like Chief Mike Custer gives him once a month. Chief Mike Garrahy said okay and he said this is what he sends to Town Manager Barbara Gilbert. Town Manager Barbara Gilbert said she would send this out. She had received it today and she didn't have an opportunity to get this out. Councilor Guy Drapeau said this is "great stuff". He was writing this information down but he said it would be great if he could get a copy of this if it is written down already.

Chief Mike Garrahy said two storm related standbys were conducted during the month of February 2014. Councilor Guy Drapeau asked Chief Mike Garrahy what this meant. Chief Mike Garrahy said six firefighters will be put in each of the firehouses for a storm standby. This is when the outside conditions become non-conducive to driving. Councilor Guy Drapeau said excellent. Chief Mike Garrahy said this is done for the safety of the firefighters, as well as for the Town.

Chief Mike Garrahy said there also were no department related injuries for the second month straight. Fire Marshal Rich Renstrom referred back to the storm standbys. These cut down on their response time because there are firefighters in the stations already. The normal response time for them coming from their homes is between eleven to sixteen minutes. This increases sometimes to twenty-two minutes in inclement weather when the roads are in bad shape. When the firefighters are in the station already, this cuts the response time down to between seven to nine minutes and this is very helpful to the residents.

Chairwoman Nadine Bell asked if there was anything else. There was nothing else.

B. Ambulance

No one from the RHVAA was present this evening.

C. Police

Chief Mike Custer told them that he would give them some general statistics for February 2014. There were one thousand nine hundred and thirty-three calls for service in the Communications Center for the Town. There were forty-three criminal arrests on the RHPD side. There were sixty-four motor vehicle accidents that were investigated and there were one hundred and fifty-two State infractions that were issued. There were one hundred and thirty warnings that were issued and there were thirty-four Town tickets that were issued. There were two hundred and ninety-four training hours.

For the RHPD personnel, James Onofrio was hired as a new Police Officer on February 21, 2014. They are at full Staff now but they are anticipating a retirement at the end of this month so the process has already been started to replace the Police Officer who is retiring. This anticipated job opening has been advertised for and a written exam has been given. There were over two hundred applicants for this one position. Some dates will be put together now for the oral interview and they will be focusing on whom they will want to select as the Police Officer. Two Police Officers are on light duty now. One of these is because of maternity and she is working in the Records Division. The other one had sliced his finger at home and has ten stitches but he should be back to normal duty hopefully next week. There is also the long term dispatcher absence still for an incident that had happened at home. The dispatcher broke her ankle and they are anticipating that she will be out for several more months. Chief Mike Custer said they are doing well other than this.

Chairwoman Nadine Bell asked if there was anything else. There was nothing else.

VI. ADJOURNMENT

Councilor Guy Drapeau made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 6:31 p.m. The motion was seconded by Councilor Bill MacDonald and adopted unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Jo-Anne Booth
Recording Secretary